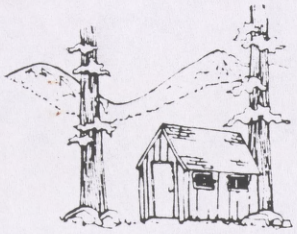


July 26, 1991

MINERAL KING PRESERVATION SOCIETY
2936 S. West Street, Visalia, California 93277
(209) 734-6150

Dear Cabin owners and MKPS members:

The Mineral King Preservation Society feels it is important to clarify a few matters that have arisen as a result of National Park Service correspondence to the MKPS and to the cabin community. Enclosed please find the official response to the NPS by John Elliott, MKPS Historian.

We are under the impression that the NPS considers the MKPS and the Mineral King District Association to be one and the same entity . This is not correct. The District Association is an unofficial coalition of approximately 135 cabin owners and users concerned with the ongoing maintenance of the cabin community (relations with NPS, water districts,winter security, garbage, fellowship, and preserving permits). MKPS is a legally formed charitable nonprofit public corporation with nearly 400 members dedicated to the preservation of the historical integrity of Mineral King (road,mining resources, historic trails, hydro-electric resources,archaeological sites,cabin structures, and as per the National Preservation Act of 1966 as amended in 1980, sociological resources). While many cabin related people are members of the MKPS, its membership encompasses a broad scope of people and organizations (historians, environmentalists, NPS former and current employees, Sierra Club members, an officer of the Sequoia Natural History Association, Tulare County Historical Society, etc.). To date over $40,000 has been expended by MKPS to nominate Mineral King as a multiple properties district for inclusion in the *National Register of Historic Places.*

Why is MKPS doing this? Isn't this process the responsibility of the NPS? It is. However, the NPS has not done its job since being deeded Mineral King in 1978. There are numerous examples where the NPS has failed to follow through on the management of the historical resources and ignored completely social or community resources. MKPS has demonstrated it is capable of working with the NPS on the public's behalf to create and maintain the Mineral King Historic District .

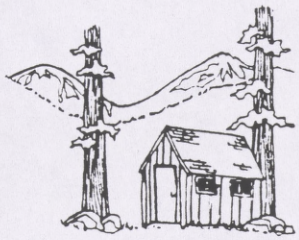
Until the recent historical process, the NPS has declared its intent and desire to follow the letter of the law in the eventual removal of all structures except its own. The NPS (Ash Mountain) has predetermined that the structures in Mineral King are not of National Register quality and do not acknowledge the presence of a historical community. MKPS is concerned about the potential termination of any cabin permit; not only because of the potential loss of an historic structure but also because of the potential loss of historical associations with that structure. However, the technical aspects of the cabin permit process are correctly a matter for the District Association to address, not MKPS.

John Elliott, MKPS historian, will be present at the District Association annual meeting on August 3, 1991 for continuing dialogue on this matter.

Sincerely,

William A. Martin
President, MKPS

2023.009.0399 a



MINERAL KING PRESERVATION SOCIETY
2936 S. West Street, Visalia, California 93277
(209) 734-6150

June 26, 1991

COPY

Mr. J. Thomas Ritter
Superintendent
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Three Rivers, California 93271-9700

Dear Superintendent Ritter:

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update regarding the Mineral King Preservation Society (MKPS) **Draft** National Register nomination for the Mineral King Historic District. Additionally, this communication will respond to some of the issues raised in your letter dated June 3, 1991.

We can ill-afford a simplistic approach to a complex problem. A desire to hurry the process and seek a formal determination in 45-60 days will not allow for a scholarly study and fair hearing. The unique cultural resources of Mineral King deserve a better treatment.

If the NPS is not authorized to allow the heirs of a deceased permittee to maintain their cabin during the process of determination, the vacated cabin must be protected and maintained until the historic district is configured. Organized as a non-profit support group dedicated to preservation, MKPS stands willing to offer the means necessary to maintain any cabin in question.

Enclosed is a copy of the June 4 letter (SHPO to MKPS) disclosing the current status of the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) review of the **Draft** nomination. Notwithstanding budget and staffing constraints, the OHP review will continue upon submittal of an updated draft as requested in the enclosed letter.

Concurrent with the review of the same document by staff at Ash Mountain, MKPS received comments (letter dated March 20, 1990) from Gordon Chappell, NPS Regional Historian. Gordon stated that a "cabin-by-cabin assessment" would help complete the submission. Relative to the potential significance, Gordon indicated ... "there clearly is some significance to the Mineral King community, but that it is local or perhaps on the fringe of being regional. "

In meetings with Bill Tweed and Ellen Seeley regarding the review of MKPS documents, it was determined that more detail about the Mineral King cabins would be necessary. Furthermore, it was suggested by Tweed that the "cabins nomination" be expanded to a multiple properties type to include the full range of resources present in the potential district.

2023.009.0399 b

In accordance with these requests, MKPS has proceeded with collecting additional data on the cabin communities. This has been a tedious process as this information is not contained in an archive or institution. Rather, it has involved the updating of MKPS cabin files and interviews with cabin owners/users, both past and present. To date, approximately one-third of these cabin summaries have been completed. Field descriptions and photos keyed to feature maps must still be completed during the current season. Is this research to be integrated into the "paperwork" processed by the Western Regional Office?

As you are aware, MKPS has been working on this submission since 1987. The Society has operated from the outset dedicated to the preservation of the historical resources of Mineral King. NPS staff has been kept informed throughout this process. These NPS individuals encouraged our efforts and assured a fair hearing if we "did our homework and let the resources speak for themselves."

Futhermore, Gordon Chappell stated that the NPS would abide by a decision made by the OHP relative to a determination of eligibility. According to NR guidelines, if any private property is involved in the potential district, which there is, the SHPO has jurisdiction in the determination.

Your letter of June 3, 1991 outlines a very different scenario with respect to the potential Mineral King Historic District. The evidence is overwhelming in support of some type of a multiple properties district. At the very least, this district should include some examples of each resource type. The question we need answered is how much preservation is appropriate, not whether the determination is a positive or negative one.

Bill Tweed was correct in requesting that the cabins be considered as a part of a larger multiple properties nomination. This was the intention of MKPS from the outset. The **Draft** nomination of the cabins element was merely first on an agenda which also includes the Mineral King Road, the mining resources, the historic trails, the hydro-electric resources, and the archaeological sites. The cabins were considered first in an attempt to avoid the inadvertent removal of potentially historic structures.

It is premature to infer that no matter what the package includes, there ... "will be a statement from the Service stating that the NPS does not support the nomination..." If the agency is truly concerned, staff should refrain from making statements before they have had the opportunity to review the MKPS research.

2023.009.0399C

To date, research has indicated that a number of the cabins were damaged by heavy snow pack, avalanches, and falling trees which necessitated their rebuilding. Most of these were rebuilt along the same lines with largely recycled materials.

We recognize that some structures may be classified as noncontributors. Others it seems, were merely remodeled as required by federal regulations and have evolved in their present form as a response to a valid historical developmental process.

A district may be based on any one of a variety of concepts. Examples range from a close approximation of what we perceive to be historical reality (such as a district representing an 1870s mining complex), to a representation of what we perceive to be a valid view of a historical process (*NR Bulletin 15* 1982:5). Apparently, a multiple properties district at Mineral King lies somewhere in between the two interpretations.

In terms of the paperwork to be submitted by the Western Regional Office (WRO) it would be redundant to submit more copies of the **Draft** nomination to OHP. It is the intention of MKPS to update the existing nomination for submittal in early 1992. We wish to continue coordinating this endeavor with your staff and WRO.

If you should have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact MKPS. We look forward to our continued relationship with the NPS and would be most appreciative of your cooperation in this matter.

Respectfully,

JE.

John F. Elliott
MKPS Historian

enc.

cc: Board of Directors, MKPS
Office of Historic Preservation
Gordon Chappell, NPS Western Regional Office
Calvin Dooley, Congressman—17th District

2023.009.0399 d

STATE OF CALIFORNIA — THE RESOURCES AGENCY

PETE WILSON, *Governor*

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
P.O. BOX 942896
SACRAMENTO 94296-0001
(916) 445-8006
FAX: (916) 322-6377

June 4, 1991

COPY

Mr. John F. Elliott, Historian
Mineral King Preservation Society
2936 S. West Street
Visalia, California 93277

Dear Mr. Elliott:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the proposed Mineral King Historic District National Register nomination, and your request for a site visit by this office. I regret that the extreme budget and staffing constraints on our office preclude such a visit at any time in the near future. We would, however, be willing to review an updated draft of the nomination that includes photos of all major features, including photos that show the features in relationship to each other and to the landscape. The nomination should include descriptions of each feature and a summary of alterations and their approximate dates. It would also be helpful to have a numbered map, keyed to the feature descriptions.

In addition, please submit a copy of the mining patent documents for the Honeymoon and Crowley cabins.

Sincerely,

Eugene Hattauer for
Kathryn Gualtieri
State Historic Preservation Officer

2023.009.0399 e

Joan

One down to

Trent & Josephine

August 1991

Dear Members:

When Mineral King was transfered from Forest Service to Park Service jurisdiction in 1978, Congress set in motion the eventual elimination of private cabin use in the area. The NPS is intent on following the letter of Public Law 95-625, and will not renew permits where the owner of record,as of 1978, is deceased. There are now two permits, one in Cabin Cove and one in East Mineral King, that have not been renewed. These cabins are still standing due to the efforts of the Mineral King Preservation Society. The application for the National Historic Register has again been delayed because the State Historical Preservation Office has been unable to send anyone to Mineral KIng for the required site survey.

It appears now that the NPS is attempting to take control of the Historic application process and go directly to Washington, D.C. for a quick determination, possibly by the end of this year. It is clear from the Superintendent's letter to all area permittees dated June 10, 1991, that the NPS does not agree that the structures have any cultural or historical significance. If the NPS is successful in bypassing the State Historical Preservation Office, the odds are much greater that their opinion will prevail.

The purpose of the Mineral King Preservation Society has been to preserve the stuctures in the area and hopefully arrive at an understanding and or agreement with the NPS for the upkeep and maintenance of the cabins by the current permittees and their families. This plan now seems to be in jeopardy. Various members of the District Association have advocated pursuing different approaches to the situation, primarily through collective legal challenges and possible legislative changes by Congress. We now have a Congressional Representitve for the 17th District that is more sympathetic than his predecessor.

This letter is to inform you of the current situation in the Mineral King area, and ask that you respond on the following form, whether or not you would support an effort to pursue a change in Public Law 95-625 and mount legal challenges to permit termination. There are approximately 140 names on the District Association mailing list and there are many more family members, relatives, and friends who may be interested in perpetuating the Mineral King area as we have known and loved it these many years. Please photocopy this letter and form and share them with friends and family.

The Mineral King District Association is contemplating the creation of a legal and legislative defense fund. We need to know to what degree this action would be supported and approximately what amount of money would be contributed to maintain an ongoing effort. It will be a long, hard and expensive fight with no guarantee of success. If we do nothing, it is almost a certainty that the cabins will be eliminated, one by one.

Sincerely,

Les Reynolds

2023.009.0399F

MINERAL KING DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

5357 N. Hazel Avenue
Fresno, CA 93711

Name _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

Cabin Affiliation _____ East _____ West _____ Cabin Cove

Support Challenge _____ Yes _____ No

Financial Support _____
(over one year)

Comments:

2023.009.0399G

MINERAL KING DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

August 3, 1991

1. Call to order

2. Winter security report
   - A. Excess funds,1990-91?
   - B. 1991-92 arrangements
   - C. Past winter problems?
   - D. Recent breakins?

3. Refuse removal
   - A. Continuing problems
     1. Oversized refuse, carpets, chairs, etc.
     2. East end use of NPS trash cans
   - B. Change in dumpsters- 1, two lid, 1, one lid

4. Living with and within the Park
   - A. No organic garbage outside
     1. No melon rinds for the deer
     2. No food for the squirrels
     3. No food for the bluejays
     4. No meat bones thrown into the bushes
     5. Pets must be on a leash or restrained-does with fawns
     6. Pets should not be left unattended
   - B. General cabin safety
     1. Water turned off when unoccupied-espicially West MK
     2. Establish opening and closing procedure, checklist?
     3. Fire safety rules-hoses, extinguishers, debris?
     4. Propane safety-Cabin Cove incident!

5. Nominating Committee
   - A. Election of officers
   - B. Board members-need reps. from East MK

6. NPS
   - A. Intoduction of current area personnel-Roger
   - B. Explanation of recent change in permit fee-Roger
   - C. Fire prevention inspections around cabins-Roger
   - D. Wildlife problems-Alia
     1. Bears
     2. Marmots
   - E. NPS position on MKPS efforts-Ellen Seeley
   - F. Other comments-Roger

7. MKPS report-John Elliott?

8. Other business

9. Adjournment

2023.009.0399H